



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **METRO BOARD APPROVES FUNDING AND CONTRACTOR FOR CRENSHAW-TO-LAX LIGHT RAIL LINE**

After more than 30 years of discussion and planning, organizing and advocating, full funding for the design and construction of the Crenshaw-to-LAX light rail line was approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board Thursday. The vote, at last, gives the South Los Angeles corridor a rail line that will spur economic development and serve as a regional connector to the Los Angeles International Airport.

Work on the \$1.27 billion-contract, which was awarded to Walsh/Shea Constructors, is expected to begin immediately and is scheduled for completion in 2019. The line will cover 8.5 miles and will serve as a major economic engine, transporting workers employed by restaurants, hotels, rental car fleets and other airport-related industries, to their jobs. The entire budget for all costs related to the Crenshaw-to-LAX line is estimated at \$2.05 billion.

The Crenshaw-to-LAX rail line is expected to significantly revitalize a corridor that includes landmarks such as Hollywood Park, the Forum, West Angeles Church of God in Christ, Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza and Leimert Park Village. Equally important, it will help ease traffic congestion and decrease air pollution by reducing vehicle emissions. More than 55 percent of the Crenshaw-to-LAX line is either underground or above the street level, more than any other light rail line in Los Angeles County.

"This has been a decades-long, monumental effort by an array of elected officials, community advocates and Metro staff," said Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas, who has championed the line since his days as a Los Angeles City councilman in the 1990s. "We did this together and now we are poised to begin construction on a dream that will help millions."

“This is a region where mobility is prized; it is also a place of dreams and opportunity. Those two are not disconnected: Transportation projects that are well planned have the ability to transform neighborhoods and connect communities. I look forward to the groundbreaking later this year so we can move forward on this long-awaited project.”

The Crenshaw corridor was originally envisioned in 1967 as one of five key transit corridors in Los Angeles County, but that plan failed to gather enough backing or funding. The project re-gained momentum in the 1980s with then state Senator Diane Watson, Congressman Julian Dixon and Mayor Tom Bradley, championing the rail line as a road to economic development. Once again, however, it was derailed by funding and other issues.

It was not until 2008, with the passage of Measure R, approved by a two-thirds majority of L.A. County voters, that a projected \$40 billion in traffic relief and transportation upgrades over 30 years made funding for projects such as the Crenshaw-to-LAX line viable. Two years later, with strong backing from Sen. Barbara Boxer, the federal government provided a \$543 million-loan against future sales tax revenue to keep momentum on the project moving forward. In May, the Metro board voted to place a station at Leimert Park and in Westchester, a long-awaited commitment that was welcomed by many in the community.

“Today we witnessed the Metro Board, a collection of elected officials, act as statesmen and women by protecting the necessity of transportation for every community that will be touched by the Crenshaw line,” said Nolan Rollins, CEO of the Los Angeles Urban League. “The Los Angeles Urban League applauds those who fought for the access to public transportation, most importantly their commitment to the citizens of Leimert Park.

Please click on the link below to view a timeline of the Crenshaw-to-LAX light rail line.  
<http://ridley-thomas.lacounty.gov/crenshaw-lax/>

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